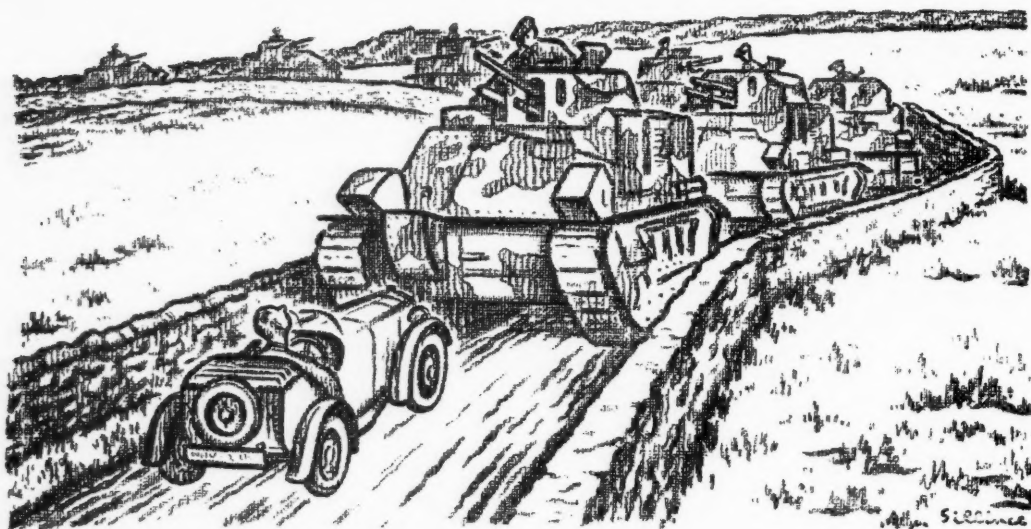


THE LONDON CHARIVARI

December 13 1939



"Well—I suppose one of us will have to go back."

Investigations of Hector Tumbler

The Case of the Missing Masterpiece

THE disappearance from the Borewich Municipal Art Gallery some years ago of Angelico Dentista's masterpiece, "Tiberius Receiving a Deputation of Ventriloquists at Capua," made front-page headlines for a few brief days. There were interviews with the curator of the gallery, Mr. William Topheavy, talks by film stars on the Italian Primitives, and even a photograph of the missing picture. Then came the horrible Trouserpress Murders, and the fickle public lost all interest. The whole affair seemed destined to sink into the limbo of forgotten crimes, at most to be resurrected, perhaps years later, as an after-dinner anecdote at some Commercial Travellers' Dinner at Runcorn or Seaham Harbour.

But it was not to be. Hector Tumbler, for one, was not satisfied. There were several peculiarities in the case which had aroused his interest. Not merely had a picture been stolen, for one thing; another picture had been substituted for it—a picture entitled "Suspense," depicting a beautiful girl boiling an egg, while a fair-haired young man, wearing a frock-coat and a fireman's helmet, looked on with an arch smile. Some people might even have preferred it to Dentista's masterpiece. But Tumbler was not satisfied.

After some weeks of self-communion and several short holidays by the sea he decided that the only thing to do was to visit Borewich and make investigations on the spot. One autumn evening, therefore, we reached the grim Northern city, with its tall chimneys and smoke-blackened buildings, where the very men and women in the streets seemed to walk about as though bent on some purpose.

We were early at the Art Gallery next morning, but even so it was some time before we could convince the door-keeper that we really wanted to enter. The curator was a small lanky man, whose plain black clothes, furrowed brow

and extreme pallor only served to accentuate his air of melancholy. He looked blank when our names were announced, and even blanker when we explained that we wanted to look round the gallery, as though he scented a joke.

"Well, if you must, you must," he said at last, trying to laugh good-humouredly, as he led the way up an impressive staircase. "Ha! Very few visitors about to-day," he added in a curious tone which we were to remember later, as our footsteps, particularly Tumbler's, boomed hollowly through the deserted chambers.

He led us from room to room, pointing out now a Madonna by Chiaroscuro, now a landscape of Da Capo, now a sombre-toned portrait of some Spanish grandee by Blanco del Huevo. But as the hours passed I began to wonder whether the extent of the robbery had not been underestimated in the papers. For here and there upon the walls, cheek by jowl with Old Masters, appeared quite unaccountable pictures. No. 17 in the Florentine Room, for instance, which in the catalogue appeared as Nicola della Trombone's allegorical study, "Faith Accepting a Drink from Triumph," proved in actual fact to be a picture entitled "Just Friends." It showed a man playing the piano, while a big black retriever by his side turned over the leaves of the music, at the same time looking up in his master's face with a yearning expression. Even I, who am no art critic, heaven knows, could see that something was wrong.

Presently Mr. Topheavy made some excuse and left us. His footsteps had scarcely died away before Tumbler seemed to start into life.

"There's not a moment to lose!" he shouted quietly. "We must hide!" Suiting the action to the word he dragged me behind a curtain. Through a chink we could see almost

the whole extent of the Flemish Room. And there, for what seemed hours, we waited, with some impatience on my part at any rate. But it was obvious that Tumbler's detective faculties were keyed up almost to vanishing point.

All at once a panel slid back at the far end of the room. A masked figure, wearing the uniform of a gallery attendant, emerged stealthily and crossed the room, pausing at last before Henrik van Snouwt's famous portrait of Elizabeth de Hooter. Furtively he unhooked it and carried it away. After an interval he reappeared with a picture under his arm. He hung it in the vacant space, then vanished as mysteriously as he had come.

We rushed out from our hiding-place. It was the work of a moment to confirm our fears. The picture bore the ominous title "Playmates o' Mine."

In a second Tumbler was on his knees by the mysterious panel, pressing his fingers here and there, laying his ear to it, and even carving his initials on it with a penknife. All to no purpose. Even Tumbler, I think, had almost given up hope, when the panel without any apparent reason suddenly slid back.

We found ourselves in a large studio, stacked with pictures in various stages of completion; it needed but a second's glance to assess their worth. And at the far end of the room the masked criminal was even now working at an easel.

He had seen us. With one bound he had flung down his brush, with another he had flung down a tube of paint, and with yet a third was at the door. But Tumbler barred the way. With the famous straight left, delivered simultaneously with both hands, which in his heyday had felled many a burly tram-conductor, the great detective gummed his man to the ground. Another second and he had torn the mask from his face. I gasped with astonishment. The man on the ground was no other than Mr. William Topheavy.

"Only let me get up," groaned the curator, "and I will confess everything."

Tumbler helped him warily to a chair. Between sobs the curator told the whole wretched story: how ever since he had seen a water-colour of his, called "Auntie's Secret," hung on the line at the Borewich Junior Art Club Exhibition he had tried to resist the temptation his position afforded. And how strong the temptation must have been! Here, to his very hand, were acres of wall-space populated by Old Masters, the productions of men long dead, who perhaps did not even care whether their pictures were hung or not. He, the curator, was consumed with longing to see his work on the line, more than ever so when even the Borewich Junior Art Club would no longer accept it. The day came when he could resist no more. On that day Dentista's masterpiece disappeared. The rest followed. He did not ask for lenience. All he could do was to throw himself on our mercy.

I am not ashamed to admit that by the time the curator had finished I had joined my sobs to his. Tumbler, however, was made of sterner stuff. While we wept, he was thinking. Suddenly he came to a decision. Taking the curator gently by the arm with one hand, he seized half a dozen canvases in the other, and led the way to the gallery. Wondering, I followed. Soon, with a mixture of surprise and admiration for my great-hearted friend, I understood.

By the time evening came the walls of the Borewich Municipal Art Gallery were as destitute of Old Masters as were its floors of passing feet. Instead, an array of dogs, cats, sparrows, little girls in hayfields, sunsets on Dartmoor, and stags feeding out of the hands of policemen spoke of an ambition fulfilled, a heart set at ease.

At "The Mulberry Tree"

"WHEN things is blackest," says Sam to me,
As we munched our lunch at "The Mulberry
Tree,"

"It's only a fool as'd grumble or curse—
When things is blackest they can't get worse.

I remember the day when the old white sow
Fell dead, and likewise a Guernsey cow;
I sez to myself, I sez," sez Sam,
"I'm similar like to Job, I am."

But Job he stuck it, and so did I,
And we got straight again by and by;
Some things went right if some went wrong—
And then these Nazis come along.

Well, there it is, it's clear we got
To show them Nazis what is what;
We'll have to give our breeks a hitch
And show Herr Hitler which is which.

And there's one thing that we can do,
That's plough some grass as they ask us to;
War may be long," sez Sam, "and tough,
So hitch up yer breeks and grow more stuff."

A. W. B.



"Couldn't you find anything but the mat to black
it out?"

Extravagance

"TAKE, for instance, the case of my friend Pringleby—" I said.

I was talking to an Economist. I always like to instruct Economists, because they know so little about economy, and even less about life. They sit in their studies reading fairy stories about Trade. The true diversities of human experience are a sealed book to them, poor things.

"Take, for instance," I said, "the case of my friend Prittlehampton, a man who buys no less than three or four bottles of whisky a day—"

"There you go," interrupted the Economist (as I had already decided he should). "There we have the kind of man whom Sir John Simon so rightly admonishes, a man who spends his money on reckless dissipation when he ought to be saving it in order to buy Defence Bonds and to rescue Germany, without discourtesy or unkindness, from the Germans."

"Tut, friend Economist," I replied, shaking my finger at him. "Quite apart from the enormous sum contributed to the national revenue by all this alcohol, quite apart from the benefits conferred on barley growers, distilleries and bottle manufacturers, on the breeders of draught-horses, and the countless men employed in making those funny little stoppers that clip on over the top, I was about to say that my friend Prittleworthy is in point of fact a very abstemious fellow. Keeping only enough for one or two moderate drinks a day, he pours the rest of his whisky into the tank of his motor-car in order to supplement the meagre ration of spirit which the Government allows us from the depths of its unfathomable petrol pool. He is thus enabled to increase his efficiency as a travelling salesman in unworkable electric torches, one of the principal economic necessities of the hour. He has, I admit, a rather expensive hobby—"

"Nobody should have any expensive hobbies at the present time."

"I haven't told you what his expensive hobby happens to be. He is madly keen on interior decoration, and has begun to paper the whole of his flat with postage-stamps in a variety of colours; the effect of this is not only beautiful to the eye but vastly beneficial to the Exchequer, besides demonstrating undeniably his loyalty to the Crown. In most other ways, however, I should call my friend Pauncefoot a remarkably thrifty man. He dresses entirely in sandbags, blacks out his windows with printers' ink and lights his bedroom with a candle which he keeps under a bushel and burns at both ends; he was also one of the first to discover that macon, although (being made of mutton) it tastes more like mutton than bacon, is quite pleasant to eat as soon as you realise that when you eat it you are eating not bacon but mutton. He employs an hour-glass to tell the time."

"Why does he do that?"

"He sold his watches and clocks to pay his rent, constructed the hour-glass out of pieces of a packing-case, and borrowed the sand from an air-raid shelter. There is, however, one part of his life which a few of his acquaintances have seen fit to censure. He keeps an elephant—"

"A what?"

"He is supporting one of the elephants at the Zoo. As I dare say you know, almost any bird or animal at the Zoo may be supported on a fixed scale of charges by any private benefactor who is charitably disposed. My friend Petworthy might have supported a marmoset, a wart-hog, an agouti, a parakeet, or nothing at all. He has chosen to nurture an elephant. But I for one cannot find it in my heart to blame

him here. The Zoo is a national institution of scientific and sentimental value. If the best comes to the best, my friend will have proved himself a public benefactor; for what would London say if it awoke one morning to find itself bereft of all those animals in which it delighted so long? If the worst comes to the worst and all the animals have to be killed for food, my friend Proudeston, instead of having reared a sheep or a pig (which we are all asked earnestly to do) will be seen to have fattened at least one colossal food reserve, able to be converted at a moment's notice into elephacon. Furthermore he has refused to be an unpaid air-warden on the grounds that a million or more unemployed citizens are being paid for doing nothing at all, and that if they became air-wardens they could serve their country by sitting at the telephone and waiting for the sirens to sound and at the same time recover their moral and their self-esteem.

"And then there is the question of supplies. It was this same Pramlingham who first suggested that we should export the House of Shakespeare, the Tower of London, the original home of the Washington family, and Domesday Book to the U.S.A., and pawn them for gold to assist the Cash-and-Carry Plan.

"Again it was his idea that the Allies ought to fire off more guns in order that Great Britain should have more munition-makers. We ended the last war, in which he was a humble foot-slogging subaltern, with everybody employed on work of national importance. We have begun this one by turning everybody out of employment and not creating enough national importance to go round.

"With the exception of the Ministry of Information, he says that every kind of service is understaffed. So if ever the sale of unworkable electric torches should fall off he is perfectly ready to become a Town Major, a Transport Officer, a Provost Marshal, or to put his blue pencil at the service of the Censor, or to occupy any other post when duty points the way."

"I don't think an awful lot," said the Economist, "of the brains of your friend Mr. Prittlebury, or whatever he is called."

"Parkinghurst is the actual name," I said coldly, "and to me who have known him since boyhood he has always seemed a man amongst men."

EVOE.

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CHRISTMAS TREAT FUND

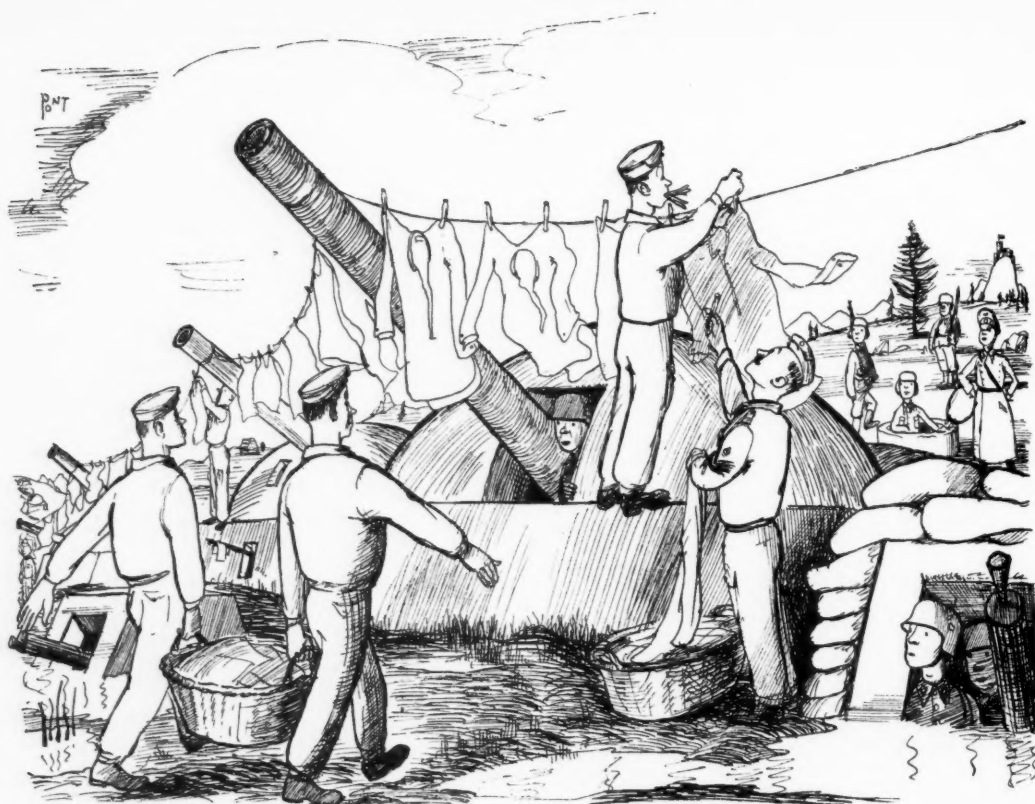
EVACUATION is now recognised as a social experiment of first importance. It is vital that it should not be broken up by a mass trek back to town at Christmas-time; for London will be as dangerous on Christmas Day as on any other day (indeed the Germans first bombed London on a Christmas Eve during the last war), and once the children are back there is no knowing when they will be got away again.

The Christmas Treat Fund has been set up to provide parties, etc., for the 300,000 boys and girls evacuated from the Greater London area into the safety zones. It has a slogan—"Keep them Happy, Keep them Safe"—now appearing on the hoardings above a brilliant design by Mr. J. H. Dowd. The Fund is an all-party one, backed by Government support. *Punch* readers who will help the good work are asked to send a donation to Mrs. E. M. Lowe, Chairman of the L.C.C., at County Hall, S.E.1.



THE SECRET SITTING

"I hear you're going to talk about Supplies, governor. Don't forget there's a big supply of me."



POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS—LIFE IN THE B.E.F.

Amendments

THE sad September of my life that brought the bursting storm
Brought back as well the buried past and my old uniform.

I marvelled at the garb that once adorned my lissom youth,
And then betook myself to Flights, whose tape revealed the truth.

Yet why should middle-age hold back as though romance
had flown?

Let Hore-Belisha give me bread: I'd give him fifteen stone.
Behold me, then, a subaltern of dignity and poise,
With "Mutt and Jeff" upon my breast to silence ribald
boys. . . .

And what's my contribution to the fight for freedom's
cause?

I'll whisper it in chorus, but I do not seek applause:

*I sit and do amendments,
Amendments, amendments,
Whole chapters of amendments,
With scissors, ink and glue;
Deletions of amendments,
Amendments to amendments,
The regular amendments*

*(Ephemeral amendments)
That someone has to do!*

I'd hate to be the author of some well-considered scheme,
An intricate, perfected and Napoleonic dream,
And then behold it cluttered up with scraps that float about
Or "substitutions" inked in red and very soon struck
out—

As thus: "Delete the detail shown in columns (i) to (iii);
Insert new numbers as attached, Appendix A and B."
I cross things out, and put things in, and finish off the act
By filling up a solemn form to certify the fact. . . .

That, then, is what I do all day and what they pay me for,
So leave me in the office and I'll help to win the war

*By doing these amendments,
Amendments, amendments,
Sheets flowing with amendments,
Like Freedom's flags unfurled:
Deletions of amendments,
Amendments to amendments . . .
Is life not all amendments?
And provident amendments
May yet amend the world.*

I Sent My Wife Away

How I Make the Bed

AS I am fully dressed by the time I remember about this (except for my collar, which is lost), I must find a dressing-gown to guard my blue suit against the ravages of sheet and blanket fluff, so I stir the pile of bed-clothes with my foot until a bit of the required design comes to the surface. I seize this with both hands and pull vigorously, bracing a taut leg against the eiderdown. It happens to be the belt, however, and comes away without resistance, so that although I grasp the situation immediately and cut off the power at the main, it still becomes necessary for me to clutch for support at my handkerchief-drawer, which in the ordinary way opens two inches at one side and four at the other, thereafter declining to move further in any direction; but it has evidently turned over a new leaf in the night, for it slides sweetly out, its runners continuing to revolve gently for some time after I have fallen between the end of the bed and the canvas-backed chair.

I am not such a fool as to try to put the drawer back again, but shove it under the bed, forgetting about its runners, which carry it farther than I had anticipated and but for its encounter with a tumbler of barley-water standing by the bed's off-side hind leg would no doubt have carried it across the landing and down the stairs to the door of the flat below, where it would have been taken in at once and never seen again, judging by what happens to my milk. So I feel I owe the barley-water something and accord it the honour of being mopped up by my pyjama trousers, which I wring out methodically and hang at the foot of the bed to dry.

Looking at my watch I see that it is half-past eight. I have ten minutes to make the bed.

When I have dislodged a sponge-bag from the sleeve of my dressing-gown I put it on and begin systematically to disentangle the first sheet which comes to hand. It has formed itself into a compact spiral, admirable in case of fire but over-conscientious in present circumstances, and has wound itself like a pale cobra round the rest of the bedding, so that attempts to release its victims have the effect of wheeling all the clothes hoopwise across the room until they are brought to a standstill under the window. Fancying that I detect my mistake, I ferret about for the cobra's tail and pull that instead, with the result that the whole thing is

wheeled back again and the *status quo* restored.

I am still calm.

Taking each article separately, from the topmost blanket downwards, I lay them on the bed one by one until the aggressor lies alone on the floor. Then I take it firmly by its ugly head and shake it in the air, producing a cracking noise which I find rather stimulating: it implies that I have the upper hand, and I unwisely submit to the temptation to repeat the move. This time the whip-crack is replaced by a tinkling sound and with a chastened sigh I kick the remains of my atomiser gently under the dressing-table.

Now comes a matter which calls for skill and judgment. Having found two corners of the unravelling sheet I take up my stand by the near-side foreleg of the bed and, after addressing it three or four times, I make my cast; but as I have also taken my stand on the other end of the sheet all it does is to fly back and shroud me from head to foot. I fight my way free, conscious of an odour of rubber hot-water bottles, and make a second cast. This time the sheet billows encouragingly over the bed and my spirits soar as I see that it is going to drop fair and square on to the target, so that there will be nothing to do but tuck it in and get the next one. I release my hold on the corners, therefore, but while the sheet's far end maintains its position in mid-air the free end telescopes abruptly away to meet it and the thing falls heavily across the head of the bed in a solid rope. Biting my lower lip I walk round

and begin to unroll it, pausing half-way to remove the pile of clothes placed there a moment before, and while I am looking for somewhere to put these a subdued slithering noise takes place behind me.

Although I know that the sheet has slid unobtrusively to the floor I pretend to be deceived and, leaving it to sit there smirking at the imagined success of its manoeuvre, I make as if to look out of the window. Then dropping my burden in a flash on the canvas-backed chair I whirl round, gather up the sheet in my arms and bear it on to the centre of the bed by sheer weight, finding its four corners and hurling them to their appointed places before it can say Peter Robinson.

So far so good. But when I begin to make my way to the other side to add the finishing touches something plucks at my skirts and detains me. It is the canvas-backed chair, which has folded up in protest against the arrival of the bedding and as a further mark of disapproval has seized the bottom of my dressing-gown and holds it firmly between clenched struts. For some seconds I wrench blindly, but it is no use. I know that chair, and yielding to the inevitable I struggle out of my dressing-gown, noticing with resignation that it has in any case been on inside-out so that my blue suit is layered with a rime of cotton threads and small feathers not likely to be measurably augmented during the remainder of the engagement.

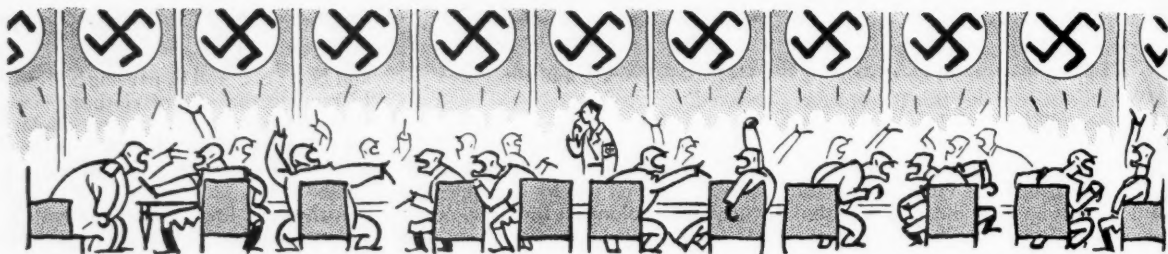
Glancing at my watch I see that it is still half-past eight. I hold it to my ear, but it is dumb. I shake my wrist violently, causing the few surviving fragments of glass to leave the frame and tinkle faintly against the window. I am only vaguely aware of stepping squarely on the barley-water tumbler as I run to look at the drawing-room clock. It says ten minutes to nine.

With a muffled cry I snatch my hat and umbrella from the piano and descend the stairs with a gliding motion akin to levitation, pausing only by the door of the flat below to disengage my right foot from the handkerchief-drawer. In the hall a blurred figure whom I recognise with dull surprise as my weekly woman wishes me good morning and shouts my name after me two or three times as I career down the street.

I neither know nor care what she wants, though it occurs to me shortly after I reach the office that she may have noticed I am wearing no collar.



"... 'I remind you of who?' I said. And then I knocked the blighter down."



The Big Push

FOR weeks I had been saying to myself "I must look in at the Wilhelmstrasse and see how they are all getting on," but I kept putting it off. Then, in last Sunday's paper, I read that article by Mme. Tabouis. "Germany," she said, "is in the throes of a chaotic military muddle. Each group is torn by dissension." I grabbed my hat and hurried round. I saw that I had been missing something good.

"Is the Fuehrer in?" I asked of the genial storm-trooper at the door.

"Not yet, Sir," he replied. "But the conference is called for eleven. Go right in. You will find all the boys there."

The front office was full, as any room would be that contained Field-Marshal Goering. I noticed several groups, all torn by dissension. I joined a couple of Generals who were chatting in low voices by the umbrella-stand.

"Don't seem to get us anywhere, these conferences," one was saying. "Just a waste of time."

"It's those bright ideas of our beloved Leader's that hang things up," assented the other. "I do sometimes wish he would leave military affairs to the military."

At this moment the umbrella-stand moved from its place and arrested the two speakers. The Gestapo never sleeps and Himmler is a master of disguise. A few minutes later the Fuehrer bustled in.

"Well, here we all are," he said. "Now, about getting this war started. Anybody any suggestions?"

"I was thinking——" said Ribbentrop.

"What with?" said Goering, who has a great gift for repartee.

"Now, boys, boys," said the Fuehrer indulgently. "Cut out the cracks. We're all working for the good of the show. Here's a thought that crossed my mind as I was coming here. Let's destroy Britain."

"Er—how?" asked Party Member Hess.

"Invade her, of course. Yes, yes, I know we haven't guaranteed her neutrality, but one's got to do the irregular thing sometimes. Our troops cross the North Sea, escorted by pocket battleships. You did say," he added, turning to Goebbels, "that we had destroyed the British Fleet?"

"Well," said the Doctor, a little embarrassed, "we have sunk the *Ark Royal* seven times, but——"

"Oh, all right, then. Let's wait till the North Sea freezes, and skate across."

"The North Sea does not freeze."

"Why not? The Baltic does."

"In the case of the North Sea, there would appear to be some local rule."

"Oh? Well, then, let's destroy France."

There was an awkward silence.

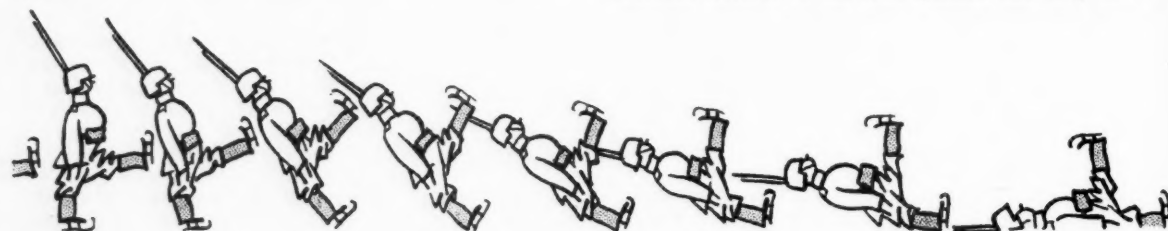
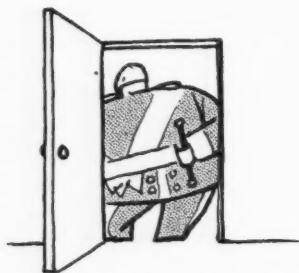
"One is faced with certain difficulties, Leader," said General Brauchitsch, with an embarrassed cough. "The Maginot Line——"

"What's that?"

"Well, Leader, it's a little difficult to describe exactly. It consists of—how shall I put it?—a number of fortified positions——"

"Why wasn't I told about this Maginot Line? Don't I get any co-operation?"

"And then of course," said Ribbentrop, "we are rather trying to conciliate France. But I don't understand the French. We go out of our way to entertain them with excellent lectures on the loud-speaker, and they shoot off



machine-guns at us. The other day we actually went to the expense of engaging a brass band——"

The Fuehrer held up his hand.

"Don't say any more. I've got it. My secret weapon. German bands. There was a time when they were the scourge of England. Read the English national poet, Calverley. Look through the back numbers of *Punch*. It is the one thing England dreads. We attack by air. A hundred thousand parachutes, each dropping a man with a trombone. They land and form units. Well, look, boys, work it out for yourselves. Imagine Churchill trying to concentrate, with a couple of German bands—one playing Verdi and the other Wagner—outside his window. And the same all over London. To get a German band to go away you have to give them a shilling. How long could the finances of any nation stand the drain of constantly paying out shillings? Within a year the country will be bled white."

Field-Marshal Goering glanced round the gathering. His eyes were gleaming.

"Nice work, Leader," he said. "I think, gentlemen, that I shall not be misinterpreting the sentiments of this meeting if I say 'Heil Hitler!'"

"Heil Hitler!" came the crashing chorus.

"Against this secret weapon of our Leader's the British have no defence."

"Suppose they suck lemons?" said a musical voice. I recognised it as that of

Mme. Tabouis, and was surprised, for I had not known that she was present, though she generally is. Then I saw that an aspidochelone

across the room was quivering gently. The Fuehrer looked about him, frowning. He was obviously in one of his pets.

"Who said that?"

"It sounded like Goering," said Ribbentrop.

"I thought it was Ribbentrop," said Goering.

"There's something in it, you know," said Brauchitsch thoughtfully. "It would wreck the whole thing."

"So now we've got to start all over again," said the Fuehrer fretfully. He paused a moment. "Look, how would this be? Bore a tunnel under France and Spain and come up alongside Gibraltar."

I left them at it, and went round the corner for a blotting-paper sandwich and a cup of blackberry coffee.

P. G. W.



To a Favourite Barrage Balloon

GOLD in the dawn I've seen you shine,
And silver in the moon,
Cherished your beauty, called you mine—
O more than a Balloon!

For me what varying spells you weave!—
Now white against the blue,
Now dark against a stormy eve,
So changeable, yet true.

Serene, ethereal, free you ride;
They say you are, I know,
To some invisible anchor tied,
But yet it seems not so;

Rather it is as though borne high
By pure inviolate will
You hold your station in the sky
To bid me comfort still.

* * * * *

To-day I walked through (Hush-hush) Square,
Where oft my footsteps pass,
And dun and dingy you were there,
Lurching upon the grass.

Penned within privets, planes and rails
On lawns of sooty green,
With cylinders and huts and pails,
Looking—no, not obscene—

But conjuring up a mixture, say,
Of whale, deflated frog,
Hot-water-bottle in decay:
A dismal catalogue.

'Twas ever thus. Stay! I would not
Be fickle like the rest:
Should auld acquaintance be forgot?
The heart within my breast

Bids me deny that cynic scorn,
Bids me ignore my pain,
For on some blissful future morn
They'll blow you up again.

Once more you'll sail the untrodden
ways

Our London's streets above,
And I shall still be there to praise
And (*faute de mieux*) to love.

J. C. S.

At the Pictures

NOT SO DEEP

I SEEM to have reached a stage at which I just don't want to be bothered with any more doctors. Not, at any rate, doctors who are also LLOYD C. DOUGLAS characters such as have *Magnificent Obsessions* or see the Green Light, or flaunt White Banners, or have a *Disputed Passage* (Director: FRANK BORZAGE) to . . . I'm not quite sure where. It strikes my cynical mind that Mr. DOUGLAS himself might not be able to explain any too precisely, either. These stories based on a phrase of simple-minded philosophy may be all very fine and large—as they are, and slow too, by gosh—but where do they get in the end? In my opinion they belong with so many novels (of course they all were novels) in the Spurious Highbrow category. At bottom sentimental, melodramatic stories, they are dressed up in a way designed to make the reader or the cinema-patron feel that he must be pretty clever to believing them. To put it brutally, high-class hokum.

This picture is all about one (JOHN HOWARD) of those idealistic young doctors who become assistants to great but embittered medical geniuses and through suffering are made aware of that "something more than science (call it what you will) which"—and so on. AKIM TAMIROFF is excellent as the great man: so good that he shows up the falsity of the end, when he has to see the light and go soft all of a sudden. And DOROTHY LAMOUR—

But what, you may ask, is DOROTHY LAMOUR doing in this narrative? It is a bit hard to decide. She represents distraction from work; she it is who inspires human feelings in the young doctor, to the disgust of the old one. No need to tell you that Miss LAMOUR is very efficient at this.

The picture contains hospital and operation scenes,

and we go to Shanghai for some bombing; on which accounts quite a number of people will avoid it. But AKIM TAMIROFF is worth seeing.

Disputed Passage ends with the hero



CUPID CONQUERS WHEN DOCTORS DESPAIR—I

Dr. Forster AKIM TAMIROFF
Audrey Hilton DOROTHY LAMOUR
John Wesley Beaven JOHN HOWARD

on a bed of sickness and the heroine turning up to give him the Will to Live; and, bless me, so does *In Name Only* (Director: JOHN CROMWELL). This is another High-Class piece, chiefly remarkable for presenting KAY FRANCIS as a villainess, one *Maida*. *Maida*

married *Alec* for money and position, and *Alec* fell in love with *Julie*, and *Maida*, a thoroughly nasty (though exceedingly elegant) woman, refused to give him a divorce and did her best to make him and *Julie* miserable . . .

Do you see opportunities here for CAROLE LOMBARD (of *Nothing Sacred*) and CARY GRANT (of *The Awful Truth*)? Nor do I; but they do as well as most people could. It's just a pity that they should be so wasted, that's all. Mr. GRANT is given one or two chances to display his special gifts in the lighter moments, but Miss LOMBARD has to be brave and intense nearly all the time. Miss FRANCIS has little to do but glide about in expensive dresses being unpleasant to both of them.

There are good supporting players. CHARLES COBURN has that obtuse-and-disapproving-father part he must be able to play in his sleep by now. HELEN VINSON is there to be smart and catty. The picture will probably be a success, but not with me.

The other offering this week introduces GLORIA JEAN, the runner-up to DEANNA DURBIN. Never can there have been a bigger little ray of sunshine than this young lady in *The Under-Pup* (Director: RICHARD WALLACE). She takes the part of *Pip-Emma Binns*, an "under-privileged" child invited to a holiday camp with a crowd of little rich girls, who behave badly towards her; but she has a great many uncles who have taught her everything, and a *Grandpa* (C. AUBREY SMITH) with several kinds of British accent, and she's all right. There are many interesting small-part players, including BILLY GILBERT as an Italian with two wicked little sons (who at the ages of four and six respectively, or so he says, play the bass and the piano-accordion well enough to be in a band), and, particularly, VIRGINIA WEIDLER, who because of her greater experience steals the picture. R. M.



CUPID CONQUERS WHEN DOCTORS DESPAIR—II

Walker CHARLES COBURN
Dr. Muller MAURICE MOSCOVITZ
Julie Eden CAROLE LOMBARD
Alec Walker CARY GRANT



"All right, you needn't fly out at me like that—I only said 'Nice if there was an air raid.'"

Behind the Lines

XII.—The Supermen

GOD gave to men of German birth
 Authority to rule the earth.
 We are—you see it in our face—
 The one authentic Chosen Race.
 In all the world you will not find
 The equal of the German mind.
 It puzzles strangers to explain
 The wonder of the German brain;
 They could not possibly suspect
 Such overwhelming intellect.
 We have the other virtues too:
 We're brave, hard-working, faithful,
 true;
 Our strength of purpose is profound,
 Our bodies as our minds are sound.
 No grace without, no grace within,
 But is of German origin.
 We are—it is our German creed—
 A race of supermen indeed.

Strange that to people so endowed
 The use of thought is not allowed;

That gods so resolute and bold
 Must think precisely as they're told;
 That men of such colossal brain
 Should seek the nursery again.
 A race of supermen indeed!
 Who may not think or talk or read,
 Or hear what all the world has heard,
 Till Teacher kindly gives the word.
 Their wonder-brains! so ill-designed
 To use the functions of the mind
 That any thought remotely free
 Unsettles the machinery.
 One doubtful rumour from the Dutch
 (It seems) would disengage the clutch;
 One broadcast message from the Turks
 Would absolutely crash the works;
 One leaflet from a British plane
 Would pulverise the wonder-brain!

* * * * *

The Chosen Race! Thank God that we
 Have no Divine authority.

We're men; and old enough to
 vote,
 To turn, if so we wish, our coat,
 Remain at work, or go on strike,
 Say what we like to whom we like,
 Distinguish between Jews and Jews,
 Believe or disbelieve the news,
 Switch on and then switch off the
 tireless
 Romancer on the German wireless.

It's nice to be a simple man,
 And not a super-Aryan.
 It's pleasanter to be adult
 Than reverence the Siegfried cult.
 I'm glad my uncolossal brain
 Won't take me back to school
 again.

I'm glad that I can write this
 verse

Without authority from Nurse.

A. A. M.



"As you grow up, Alfie, you'll realise we do a lot of things in this life that don't seem to make sense."

Fire and Feline

"HE won't use it," Mrs. Prosser told me, apropos of nothing whatever.

It was Sunday and I was enjoying a late breakfast and such calm as Hitler's machinations permit the contemplative mind. My landlady was performing mysterious rites with the fire-irons in the grate, with the presumed intention of propitiating the gods of flame. This ceremony—of daily and not merely Sabbath use during the winter—consists in standing the various implements on end and resting them on the bars of the grate at an angle of approximately fifty degrees with the fender. By some means, the precise science of which is obscure, this causes the fire to draw—or so Mrs. Prosser has assured me in the course of discussion. I know of better ways, not the least being to let the fire get on by itself—which it seems to do quite well as a rule and which has moreover the merit of silence: the all-too-frequent avalanches of brassware into the tin fender I find disturbing to the nerves. I have too a continued apprehension lest the prayerful attitude adopted by Mrs. Prosser while nurturing the tender spark should follow its natural sequence and cause her to burst into audible incantation as well.

I do not question Mrs. Prosser. I merely said "Oh?" and waited. The poker slid down with a crash, and a piece of tentatively smoking coal adopted a policy of self-determination and fell out of the fire. The consequent shock and blast led to a general collapse, and a word escaped Mrs. Prosser which, though I may not have heard it accurately, did not sound like reverent invocation.

"No," she said, when she had erected it all once more, "it's this way again and the same with the kitchen fire. When I see the smoke blowing back over the gasworks of a morning, 'Ah,' I say to Prosser—'now I'll have trouble with the stove.' They should ought to of built the chimney facing the other way in tune with the pervading wind and the house with it, when we might have a view of the park instead of the gasworks, which is to my mind no object of beauty at the best and now, with its green and black stripes and all, is no more to my eyes than a figure of fun, though I must say that now for the first time I see reason for those so-realist pictures one saw photos in the papers of; it seems there is more sense to them after all than what one thought for: they were practising in secret for this. Well, all's fair in love and war, they say, and more in heaven than art is dreamt of in our philosophy. It is doing nicely now and drawing as intended, but I should leave them there a little while yet."

And so great is my awe of Mrs. Prosser that I dared not disturb the working of the spell by returning the fire-irons to their more proper place directly she left the room, lest she came back to see.

She did—and the tongs fell down.

"Tck!" said Mrs. Prosser, and was on her knees at once.

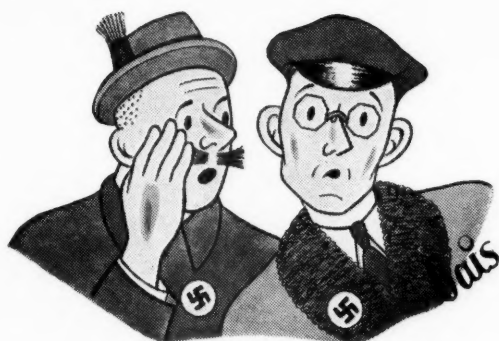
"No," she remarked absently, as with reverence she replaced the unruly implement in the unnatural attitude demanded of it, "I cannot make him understand. I suppose once they start getting old you can't, but you would think they should ought to be able to in a case like this, all the same."

I felt it wiser to say no more than "Yes?"

"After all," she went on, "it is not so much out of the ordinary when you come to think of it, except perhaps for the umbrella, and I have always watched which way he goes and made it according so as to make sure. And I see to it that the fire bucket is not where he would ineventually fall into it on coming in, so he has not that to fear in anticipation nor brood over in retrospect. But there it is: whatever I do it is always the same, and each night I retire in dread of disaster as much as of a raid."

Here the whole fire collapsed feebly upon itself and showed signs of resisting the magic powers of suggestion by fire-iron. The prospect of a chilly morning stiffened my courage and I offered Mrs. Prosser a sheet of newspaper, which to my surprise she accepted and spread across the grate in the customary way. In a few minutes the fire had regained lost confidence, but Mrs. Prosser's faith was in no manner dimmed, and briskly she stood all the fire-irons up against the grate again.

"I don't mind saying it is a worry," she confided, "though these things are sent to try us, have no fear. Even as that recent form whereon I put in the first column 'M,' presuming it meant married, and later, where it asked 'Condition of Marriage,' I put 'Happy'—there being no room for more. And when the young man came round he was that impudent I would have showed him the door but he said the Law demanded he be given a table, which I let him have a corner of the kitchen one, and he crosses out M and puts F, and when I inquired his reason he said: "'Female,' or, if you prefer, a word of four letters ending in L," he said under his breath, thinking I have no ears, whereupon I as good as up and boxed his. Then he looks further and



"A man my cousin knows has seen Russian troops travelling through the Reich. They had long beards and snow on their boots."

laughs. 'Well,' he said, 'it's nice to know there is some that are, though it is all one to the Registrar.' And he says that if they had asked for 'State of Mind,' that was easily arranged for under the letters M and D, which I did not take his meaning and still do not, it being, I assume, a matter of official technicalities, and I forgot to inquire of Prosser, his mind being on other things."

She paused expectantly, but I produced an expression suggestive (I hoped) of Prosser's enviable state, and she continued without enlightenment.

"It's hard to know what to do. Leave down the blind I must on account of Prosser's coming home late and putting on all the lights and then have all the police down on you like a hod of bricks; and each night I have tried to, as I say, set it so as he can see his way both from inside out and from outside in, but as I say, he does not seem to apprehend and you know what happens when he is left in. Well, all I suppose I can do is to presume my soul with patience and await in hopes, but if he would dispose half the intelligence to this as what he has to the goldfish I could breathe more freely of nights. He has always been that independent, as I suppose they all are, but they had nothing to solve this probulem in the book I had from the society, which made no mention save in respect of gas and the effect upon their nerves and that. Well, out of the depths of my own witfulness I have conceived a device whereby I prop it forward with my umberella so that he can push it either way with his head, the scullery window being the one he has always used, but I take it he cannot accustom himself to there being a blind, for no trouble has there been at all till now. That is burning nicely, I think, and should continue so with small attention henceforward for the morning. Well, I said to him, I said, 'You have disappointed me,' I said—'I thought you had more sense,' but he only asked for his milk. But there, there is much in the conduct of Hitler and these hostilities what is beyond our comprehension, even if they tell us all, which I doubt; so maybe it is indeed more than I can expect to be able to explain the black-out to the cat."

And with that she gathered up all the fire-irons, replaced them into their infinitely more proper recumbent state, wiped her hands on her apron with the air of one who has accomplished noble works, and—at last—left me alone with the fire.

Love Lyric

WHY is it that the songs to-day
So seldom chase my cares away
Successfully but onlee
Make me feel positively blew
Each time the topic turns on yew
And how your heart was torn in tew
And left your lips all lonelee?

Why do these madly mouthing men,
Whose arms and charms crop up ergen
Each time they love us dearlee,
Sicken me when they choose to crune
Of rowmance underneath the mune
That is a memawree so sune
Although they loved sincerelee?

These women too who fondlee hold,
Who tend to tenderlee enfold
And have such bouts of burning,
Who clamp us closelee to their heart
But keep on being wrenched apart—
Why do they pain me from the start
And plague me with their yearning?

Why should this touching talk of love
Coupled with something smug above
Affect me for the worse?
Can it be that the harmownee
Is not completely heavenlee
Or is it just the mellowdee
That mars my harpinurse?

"A college in Cardigan has offered its old canon, and a Ministry of Supply official, commenting on this stated to-day that the steel industry does not want to make a clean sweep of museum pieces which might have a true sentimental or historic value, though this is a point for decision by the owners."—*Liverpool Paper*.

Or the Bishop.



"Very well, then: you tell me where I can buy a battery."



"Another word of complaint, M'm, and I quits civilian life."

S. or S.?

I SHALL buy a fine bonnet to give to my love,
And earn a good mark from His Majesty's Gov.:
Has not Oliver Stanley, who manages Trade,
Recommended "Spend money, that money be
made"?

But Trade and the Treasury do not agree.
My love will get no pretty bonnet from me,
For Simon, who manages Money, has just
Said I mustn't spend money except when I must.

And can I pretend that she *needs* a new hat?
No, no, she can totter along without that.
Yet Stanley has clearly said "Spend what you
can,
And keep in employment the poor working-man."

And how will the hat-manufacturer pay
His rates and his taxes if I stay away?
It is obvious, then, that His Majesty's Gov.
Would *like* me to buy a new hat for my love.

Or is it? It's not. For Sir John, I suggest,
Who manages Taxes, is sure to know best;

And he has decreed that residual quids
Ought *not* to be spent on superfluous lids.

No, no, that is selfish indulgence, not Trade.
If anything's left when the taxes are paid
I must lend it at once to His Majesty's Gov.
And not buy a pretty new hat for my love.

I must not spend a penny I cannot afford:
But then it is unpatriotic to hoard.
O. Stanley would hate me to sit on a *sou*:
J. Simon will pay me quite well if I do.

No doubt Mr. Keynes could explain upon oath
How a well-meaning chap is to satisfy both;
But it is a bit hard to know how to behave
When Stanley says "Spend it" and Simon says
"Save."

No, I do not know *how* the debate is to end
When Simon says "Save it" and Stanley says
"Spend."

Meanwhile, I shall buy a new hat for my love,
Whatever the views of His Majesty's Gov. A. P. H.



TREASURE ISLAND

"How do we stand when we get it? Do we share—or do we fight?"

Mr. PUNCH'S HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND



IN A GOOD CAUSE

The buying of this material has absorbed the greater part of the money so far collected, and unless further Donations are received the cold winter will be upon us before the comforts can be made up. Every penny subscribed will be used for the comfort of the men serving, or Hospital patients, and no expenses whatever will be deducted. Though we know well that these are days of privation and self-denial for all, we yet ask you, those who can, to send us donations, large or small, according to your means; for experience in the last war has proved a hundred times over how urgent may be the call and how invaluable is the assistance that can be rendered. Will you please address all contributions and inquiries to:—Punch Hospital Comforts Fund, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

YOU are asked to think and to think in good time of the wounded. At any moment their needs may become imperative. They will not consider themselves heroes, they will not complain; they will be those who have neither fallen in action nor come safely through the ordeal, but are part of the reparable human wastage of war; we shall hear them speaking again—the less seriously disabled—in the language long ago familiar to us: “I got my packet at —; I was luckier than some,” and yet there will be months of pain in front of them before they can take their place on active service or in civilian life once more.

You are also asked to think of the Navy at sea, the men in the trenches, the men flying, minesweepers, search-light posts, anti-aircraft stations. All are in exposed, cold, wet situations. They need Balaclava helmets, stockings, socks, mittens and woolly waistcoats for the winter.

Mr. Punch has already bought and distributed:—

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Chintz | 350 yds. |
| Bleached Calico | 640 ” |
| Unbleached Calico | 300 ” |
| Turkey Twill | 50 ” |
| Flannelette | 3752 ” |
| Winceyette | 4075 ” |
| Turkish Towelling | 86 ” |
| Ripple Cloth | 1420 ” |
| Knitting Wool. | 7668 lb. |

Impressions of Parliament

Synopsis of the Week

Tuesday, December 5th.—Lords: Debate on Peace Aims.

Commons: Debate resumed on the Address.

Wednesday, December 6th.—Lords: Debate on Road Accidents.

Commons: Statement by Mr. Churchill. Further debate on the Address.

Thursday, December 7th.—Lords: Tuesday's Debate resumed.

Commons: Debate on Export Trade.

Tuesday, December 5th.—In both Houses deep regret was expressed at the death of Princess LOUISE. Afterwards they both discussed peace aims, wondering in what condition we should come out of the war and on what lines we could best pull ourselves together.

Lord SNELL was naturally convinced that these must at least be Socialist in direction. He feared that peace might land us with as many as five or six million unemployed, and that the result would be violent revolution unless the issue was resolutely faced, possibly by the creation of a Ministry of Reconstruction which could be working out schemes for diverting all the energy dammed up by war.

Lord CREWE, with whom many will agree, felt it was too early to ask for more detailed plans than had already been sketched out by the P.M.; but in an interesting speech the PRIMATE hoped that Christianity would not only be strengthened during the war but that it would emerge less conventional in kind and more sensitive to social injustice. He asked that reprisals, however much they might be earned by enemy cruelties, should be rigidly limited.

After Lord CECIL had spoken in most satisfactory terms of the criminal immorality of Soviet Russia, Lord HALIFAX once more stated our war aims. Victims of the aggressors should recover their liberties, Europe must be relieved from the recurring German nuisance, and our own security, though we had no territorial ambition, must be established; we should like to see all nations, including a right-thinking Germany, co-operating in a new Europe. But before a conference could be any use Germany must be prepared to admit the purposes for which we had gone to war and to abide by whatever settlement was reached. Deploping the brutal attack on Finland, Lord HALIFAX said that it showed how right the Government had been during the summer in refusing to negotiate a pact with Russia which would have covered

indirect aggression in the Baltic. As for the reprisals we had been forced to take at sea, he asked neutral countries to remember that their liberties as

nations, but he agreed that the emphasis should be on the economic side of international co-operation, for he believed that out of this would come closer political understanding.

Question-time was colourful, Mr. DOBBIE growing so heated over payments to soldiers' wives that he fell back loudly on that word which made *Pygmalion* and, refusing to repent, was decorously thrown out to reconsider his vocabulary and perhaps bring it up to date. It being announced that Mr. BUTLER would go to Geneva for the week-end to sit in judgment on Russian banditry, Mr. GALLACHER made in the circumstances a bold attempt to justify the ugly follies of his Bolshevik comrades; the P.M. announced that the House could have a secret sitting for the consideration of Supply; and the news that French brewers were to reproduce British beer for the troops was broken to the Witan. The suggestion of some sort of Ministry of Reconstruction was also made by Mr. GREENWOOD (when the House returned to the Address), who felt the Government's attitude to the future to be far too negative. The main point of Sir SAMUEL HOARE's speech was his conviction that present unemployment, extraordinarily high, would be absorbed during the early months of next year as industry got into its full swing.

Various Back-benchers had their say, Dr. SUMMERSKILL insisting that after the war the hospitals should be nationalised and Sir RICHARD ACLAND singing a gloomy little dirge for capitalism; but the wisest words came, as they often do nowadays, from Mr. HAROLD MACMILLAN, who urged that it was time for evacuated businesses to come back to London and the big cities and get on with their job.

Wednesday, December 6th.—After kicking rather at the restriction of the secret session to matters of Supply, the Lords had a brief debate on road accidents, Lord ALNESS suggesting a black-out speed-limit of twenty or even fifteen m.p.h., and Lord DE LA WARR being hopeful that new experiments in lighting might make a lot of difference. The normal glow of London, he said, showed for thirty or forty miles at a few thousand feet. Mr. P.'s R.'s solution, compulsory Ku-Klux-Klan outfits for all pedestrians after dark, is the only one which is any good, but is of course far too simple ever to be adopted.

A nicely worded apology by Mr. Dobbie made him one again with the House.

Mr. CHURCHILL's statement on the war at sea was as usual the brightest



NEW WORLD DUET

Duet by Lord CECIL OF CHELWOOD and Lord SNELL, chairmen of St. Stephen's, Westminster.

much as ours were threatened. He would not go quite so far as some in thinking that new hope for Europe after the war lay in the partial surrender of the sovereign rights of



DR. DULCAMARA

"Mr. MORRISON thinks there is one easy remedy for all the ills he has pointed out." Mr. Eden.



"What's the matter, Mother? I told you I was bringing Millicent down for the week-end."

feature of the day. He had good news, and some characteristically good phrases, which he rolled out with the utmost enjoyment; the seas were being "cleansed" of German commerce, the Germany navy had sunk to a form of warfare comparable to that of the I.R.A.'s habit of leaving bombs in cloakrooms, and the neutral countries were "paying a heavy toll for remaining in friendly relations with Germany." U-boats were being sunk more quickly than they could be built, probably five destroyed this week; soon two thousand of our merchant ships would be armed for defence; counter-measures were far advanced before the first magnetic mine was laid in British waters, and the extra demand for trawlers and crews had been magnificently answered. So ineffective was Germany's navy in spite of its filthy methods that, allowing for tonnage building and captured, the merchant service was only down by sixty thousand tons; and at that rate it would take a Hundred Years' War to hurt us.

Returning to the Address, the House

listened to a very sensible speech about vitamins from Miss WILKINSON, who waved some captive ones about in a small red box, to Mr. HERBERT MORRISON being not very polite about the composition of the Cabinet, and to



OUR BACK BENCH WHO'S WHO

Above is Mr. HARVEY, who makes us wish, alas!
That all M.P.s developed as nicely under glass.

Mr. EDEN, who prophesied changes in the machinery of Government but was confident that we should win through as a free people.

Thursday, December 7th.—To-day Trade held the field. When the Lords resumed their broad discussions on war and peace, both Lord STRABOLGI and Lord SAMUEL urged that there should be a Minister in the War Cabinet with full powers to co-ordinate the economic side; and in the Commons Mr. MANDER also pleaded for such an appointment, Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, however, still firmly refusing to make it.

Mr. EVANS' motion regretting that British trade was not being more intelligently conducted gave Mr. STANLEY his first opportunity to report on its progress since the war. He admitted that the administrative machine had been seriously overloaded at the beginning, but now it was working much more smoothly and the rise in the level of our exports for November was about half as much again as for October. In the last war no comparable rise had occurred until the spring of 1916.

The Secret Weapon

"E'S a sad case, that young fellow," said the man in the jersey and the bowler-hat, indicating the seaman of lugubrious aspect who had just left us. "E's got fourteen days' leave and it's taken 'im seven to get this far. It seems 'is missus 'as got 'old of a misleading story about 'ow 'e 'elped a young woman, just ordinary civil, during the black-out down at Cardiff, and she's sent 'im word through one of 'is shipmates that she's got a secret weapon. 'E's got it into 'is 'ead that it's a 'atchet.

"Of course all this talk about secret weapons is childishness and only liable to affect them that's of the nervous kind in the ordinary way. All the same, when we was coming up Channel a week or two back 'aving this in mind, something 'appened to make us an uncomfortable ship for an hour or two.

"We'd 'ad a bit of engine trouble in the night and 'ad dropped be'ind the convoy. It was a dark night, as black as the back of your 'and, with a nice breeze on the beam. I'd just taken over the wheel in the second watch when suddenly there was a racket for'ard and the ship took a bit of a list, pulling orf 'er course at the same time.

"The old man 'ad the crew at stations in no time and 'ad the wells sounded. She wasn't making no water, though she still kept 'er bit of a list and was trying 'ard to pull orf 'er course. The racket soon died down and there was nothing to be seen. All the same it wasn't natteral, and we was looking at one another. The Third Officer, wot'd just come back from shore-life and 'ad been inclined to be superior about such things, finished looking at 'is gas-mask for the first time and said 'e reckoned it was 'Itler's secret new weapon. Magnetism, 'e said it was, to pull the ship orf 'er course and pile 'er up or run 'er on a mine-field. 'E said 'e was sensitive to such things, 'is mother 'aving been psychic, and 'e could feel it in the air; and sure enough there was something funny and over'anging about the feel of things.

"Then Sparks come and said as 'ow the wireless wasn't functioning right, and that made everyone certain. The skipper wouldn't 'ave a message sent out. 'E swore that 'e wasn't going to make a perishing fool of hisself and, magnetism or no magnetism, 'e'd 'old on till daylight. And the next hour or two, with nothing more 'appening, was as uncomfortable as you'd care about, especially with the Third Officer

telling 'ow 'is mother could tell when the kids were going to 'ave scarlet fever three months a'ead and 'ow 'e'd always 'ad the same kind of sense of things.

"When the light come up we could see what it was that 'ad caught in the shrouds and the old man sent 'ands aloft to lash it secure so's we could take it 'ome. Soon after a destroyer comes fussing back from the convoy and with a spread of bunting as it might be

Trafalgar Day. The Chief Officer, 'oo was 'andy with the code-book, tells the old man: 'E wants to know 'oo the 'ell you think you are, dropping out of station in convoy to salvage drifting barrage balloons?'

"You can tell 'im,' ses the skipper, 'that I ain't done nothing of the kind. I've been to a ruddy dance, and if 'e likes to send a boat acrost 'e can 'ave the paper 'ats and the squeakers.'"

A. M. C.



"Can anyone lend me a thimble? I want to collect for a Christmas-present for Sergeant."

At the Play

"SALOON BAR" (WYNDHAM'S)

I DON'T know if you feel as cheated and thwarted as I do when at the end of a crime play the Welsh salesman in bath-taps turns out to be nothing so much as a Welsh salesman in bath-taps, and the silent girl who smokes cigars establishes herself beyond question as simply a silent girl who smokes cigars; but for my part—and I suppose the fault is EDGAR WALLACE'S as much as anybody's—I like every possible character in the story to be finally unmasked as somebody wildly different. What on earth is the good of dragging in the head-mistress of a ladies' college, for instance, if you have no intention of showing her up later as a one-legged Chinaman with a genius for the distribution of cocaine? And can there be any point in introducing a man with a sawn-off shotgun ruining his pocket, and a twisted smile, unless he can definitely be proved to be the Rural Dean of the Antarctic squandering his leave in adding to his well-known collection of the minor warblers?

In my view, none, and these being my sentiments I am bound to report that I find this play much too straightforward to be satisfactory. And also much too stationary. Its author, Mr. FRANK HARVEY, seems to have said to himself: "All the regular dénouements have been used up, every twist and turn, credible and incredible, has been done to death, so let's lead 'em astray by zigzagging so little that they just can't believe it. Let us even put a blind violinist in the corner who should by all the decencies of tradition be an Assistant Commissioner or at least a notorious public busybody, but who is in fact no more than a blind violinist." It may be that I am still smarting from this unkind cut of the violinist, for I was determined that behind those sightless eyes a great brain was remorselessly piecing the crime together and that when the moment was ripe the old man would leap from his corner and make a number of startling arrests;

but I think that when Mr. HARVEY decided to take this line he should have arranged for a more exciting and complicated plot to balance the somewhat static arrangement of the play. It all takes place in the leisurely evening

atmosphere of a West End pub, and although it is an amusing picture it needs more ginger than Mr. HARVEY has given it to make up for the fact that the solution which he hands you on a plate half-way through turns out to be the right one.

The pub is excellently drawn, one of those queer little local oases holding out bravely though great tides of traffic surge all round it. Mr. MICHAEL RELPH'S set is so realistic that you feel a churl not to turn to the man in the next seat and ask him what is his, and Mr. RICHARD BIRD'S production is admirably realistic. *Ivy* (Miss ANNA KONSTAM), pert and tough and warm-hearted, is perfect behind the bar; Mr. *Wickers* (Mr. MERVYN JOHNS) is the heavy-whiskered oracle who has worn the end stool shiny with his wisdom; *Sally Watson* (Miss BARBARA BABINGTON) is the regular quick-tongued port-and-lemon; and *Joe Harris* (Mr. GORDON HARKER) is the star turn, the loud-checked, bowler-hatted man of the world who brings a breath of urban cunning into the almost village feeling of the bar. These, with the red-necked landlord; Mr. *Hoskins* (Mr. NORMAN PIERCE), whose large family is at any moment about to be made larger in the upstairs bedroom, are the chief fixtures; other familiar types come and go. The stuff of the play rings dead true. On the evening of

its action excitement is high in the saloon bar because one of its regulars has been found guilty of murder. Nobody believes he did it except *Joe Harris*, and when a certain unexpected clue drops from the skies even he is convinced and there and then takes charge of the case, pressing his investigations with such vigour that by closing-time the real murderer is wriggling on the gaff and unanimsously convicted by that truest of juries, a barful of honest frothblowers.

The part is not to my mind rich enough for Mr. HARKER, but he plays it with the Cockney gusto which is one of the most reliably charming things in our theatre. And the way he laughs at his own jokes is an infection against which there is no known antidote.

ERIC.



THE DRIVER OF THE BEER-ENGINE

Ivy. MISS ANNA KONSTAM



MAKING HIM TALK OR PERSUASION IS BETTER THAN FORCE

Joe Harris MR. GORDON HARKER
Sally Watson MISS BARBARA BABINGTON
Fred Small MR. JOHN SALEW
Wickers MR. MERVYN JOHNS

Mr. Brunsbys Gets a Gaggle

MR. BRUNSBY, sated with spade-work, decided that he had broken up enough grass-land. Besides, livestock would be less trouble than all this digging. Or so he thought.

Sam Wilkins, local grave-digger and breaker-up of grass-land for other and more lively purposes, was, as always, immediately and hilariously helpful.

"Geese," he roared, "just the time. Fatten them for Christmas. Easy money."

"The golden egg?" smiled Mr. Brunsbys.

"No eggs in December," said Sam, a realist who did not deal in proverbs and allusions. "You buy at seven bob and sell at fifteen. Plenty of grass here. Let 'em eat it. They don't need much else till just before you knock them off. Brass for old iron, I call it."

"A gaggle of geese," said Mr. Brunsbys, who knew all the nice nouns of assembly. Sam looked blank. He was a modern countryman and knew nothing of gaggles.

Geese, Mr. Brunsbys reflected, had been a great feature of British life. History and folk-lore and nursery rhymes were full of their ganderings and wanderings. The goose-step of course was an alien idiom. In Britain there were goose-greens and goose-girls and Tavistock Goosey Fair, which the baritones sang about in concert parties. Yes, geese would strike the national note and be just right for war-time.

Sam was a man of action. Sure enough a draft of six geese arrived at the Paddock next morning, Sam Wilkins commanding. They had been bundled into a crate and now, faced with a small shed and a tangle of long grass, the members of the gaggle looked wan and wistful. "Uncommonly fine birds," said Sam. "Uncommonly near to tears," thought Mr. Brunsbys, and stood regarding them with such compassionate pride in his new property that he nearly missed the eight-forty.

The office was slack and Mr. Brunsbys was home early. It was pouring with rain as he came up to the Paddock. The geese were abroad, parading the hedge-side with solemnity and clamour. It had been Sam's strict injunction that the geese were to be put in their shed at night, lest fox or felon intervene. It would be dreadful to lose at once the whole gaggle. After all, the nation as well as Mr. Brunsbys had need of it.

The owner entered his Paddock and began, with dignified coaxing, to usher

the geese. Wan and wistful no more, impervious to persuasion, resentful of commands, the now panic-stricken six broke into a canter and a wailing chorus. Urged humanely towards shelter, they would at the last minute defy the kindly outstretched arms of the dripping and now despairing Mr. Brunsbys. For twenty lamentable minutes he gestured and implored. Steaming at last and near to swearing (and Mr. Brunsbys was rarely profane) he realised that, since Sam was not available, he would have to call in his neighbour Sproole, a humiliating prospect.

Mr. Brunsbys had a proper neighbourly loathing of Sproole. Sproole was an ex-classical master and would flaunt his scholarship in both ancient and modern letters. Mr. Brunsbys, having retained from childhood little Latin and no Greek, tried in vain to hold his own.

Sproole came out with a grim smile. He was wrapped against the weather as though he were about to go a-fowling in the frozen swamps of Alaska.

"You invite me to the Great Round-up?" he said. "A mopping-up, as the soldiers say?"

Mr. Brunsbys puffed assent.

Sproole regarded the errant birds and said with odious omniscience, "Ah, the Common Goose—*Anser vulgaris*."

He and Brunsbys marched at and

round the gaggle with folded arms. The gaggle was not to be mopped up. It withdrew to positions not previously settled in perfect disorder, a baffling manoeuvre, unusual in *communiqués*.

"No good," said Sproole. "Try this." Suddenly he barked at the gaggle. "Brek-ek-ek-ex-koax-koax!" Brunsbys stood in amaze.

"Ah," said Sproole, "you wouldn't be knowing. Never read old Henry Stophanes. Pity. It's the cry of the Athenian frog. A kind of Attic salt for their tails. I thought it might allure or even appease them." With that he repeated the Attic Frog-note wild.

It did not allure. It did not appease. The gaggle rose as one goose, extended their huge necks, flapped their wings, and took to the air. There was not much room in their compound. They came straight at their pursuers' heads. "Six geese in flight," thought Mr. Brunsbys, "are terrible as an army with bombers."

"Duck!" roared Sproole.

The word seemed to strike the gaggle as an offensive belittlement. They screamed, flying. Fortunately they did not fly high. They crashed into the wire-netting and came to earth, bruised and bewildered.

"Oh, poor things!" said Mr. Brunsbys.

There was no compassion in Sproole. "Pounce!" he cried, and pounced. Seizing the half-stunned creatures in turn by the neck, he rushed them into their shed as though it were an avian bastille.

"When appeasement fails . . ." he began. Mr. Brunsbys did not listen. Regarding Sproole, he muttered angrily to himself, "Where got'st that goose-look?" and invited his hateful but useful ally to a whisky-and-soda.

Mr. Brunsbys welcomed them in.

"I went to the pictures this afternoon," she said.

"Donald Duck?" said Mr. Sproole.

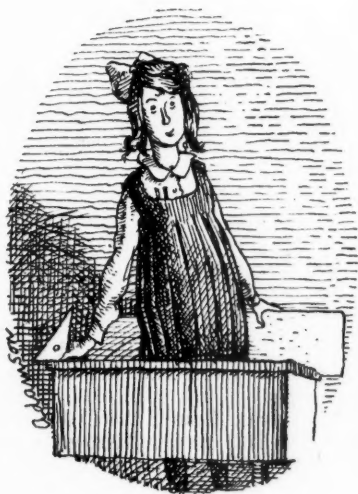
"No. Just the Marx Brothers."

"Good?" asked Mr. Brunsbys.

"You were better."

Mr. Brunsbys bristled. Sproole took it well. "It's all national service, eh, Brunsbys?" he said. "We must lower our pride to raise the victuals?"

"I quite agree," said Mrs. Brunsbys. "Besides, it's such splendid exercise. Raise food and lower the weight. There's another slogan for the Government. I'm so glad you two have taken up geese. It'll do you far more good than golf. By the way, if what I saw was a tame-geese-chase, what exactly is a wild one?" I. B.



"Parallel lines never meet in Geometry, but they do in Art."



"Courage, Master Fritz! With Nanny here, Herr Churchill is powerless."

Grandfather Monroe Looks Back

Banking Experiences

THUS," said my Grandfather Monroe, suddenly breaking a long silence, "my banking career came to an end before it had well begun."

"And your story, Grandfather," I said jovially, "has evidently come to an end before it had begun at all!"

"Your point is well taken, my boy," he replied equably. "Of what use is the climax without the plot?"

"Very true, Grandfather," I said.

"How to reconstruct the bee from its sting?"

"Yes, yes, Grandfather," I interrupted a little testily, "but you were going to tell me about your banking career."

"Of course, my boy, of course. Well, when I was about twenty my father thought that I should find something to do. The manager of the local bank

in those days was Sir Hector Hock, and my father decided to enlist his aid on my behalf.

"Sir Hector received me kindly when I called on him, and readily agreed to find me a position in the bank. I noticed that he had a large piece of sticking-plaster on his forehead, and expressed the hope that the skull had not been fractured.

"No, my boy," he replied, fingering the place gingerly, 'it's not serious. Mrs. Bolluster did it.'

"I was a little taken aback at this, since I knew Mrs. Bolluster and had always understood that she was something of an invalid.

"She came to see me," continued Sir Hector, 'about a week ago. She was carrying an immense blue china vase, which she proposed to deposit as security for a loan. I had just explained what the rate of interest would be when she came across the counter at me like a madwoman and had stunned me with a deed-box before I could lift a finger.'

"Concealing my astonishment as well as I could, I suggested that such incidents must be exceedingly rare.

"By no means, my boy," he replied. 'Often enough life and limb are in danger. Some time ago I received a call from Professor Potter, who, as I dare say you know, is a little eccentric, to say the least of it. He wanted me to finance some madcap expedition to Greenland to dig for gold, and offered me his stamp-collection, which he declared to be worth fifty thousand pounds, as security for the loan. The collection was later valued at eighteen shillings and sixpence and I was forced to tell the Professor that it was useless for his purpose. He replied that the stamps had been ludicrously undervalued and that eighteen-and-six would purchase no more than a couple of shovels. As he left the bank he glared at me menacingly and said that I should soon be torn to pieces by Chopin and Beethoven. I could make nothing of this and thought no more of it.

"About a week afterwards I had to visit a Mrs. Booley to look at a miniature Chinese pagoda which she proposed to deposit as security for a small loan, and on the way I had occasion to pass "Potter's Hovel," as the Professor had quaintly named his residence. As I drew near to the house I heard a shout of "After him, Beethoven! Tear him, Chopin!" and a moment later I saw to my dismay two bloodhounds making for me at full speed. (I afterwards heard that the Professor had so named the animals through an incredible piece of mental confusion, since he

believed that he was honouring the inventors of the steam-engine and the spinning jenny.)

"I am convinced that I owe my life to the prompt and courageous action of Mrs. Mehaffy, a wonderful woman for her years—eighty, if a day—who came out of her house like a tornado as I fled past it and drove off the hounds with a coal-hammer. From these experiences, my boy, you will deduce that the career which you propose to follow demands steady nerves, crisp thinking and spritely action."

"I replied quietly that I had set my heart upon the bank and that I would attain this desire though menaced by baboons and cobras, let alone a couple of bloodhounds."

"Thus it came about," continued my grandfather after a short pause, "that I became an acrobat; and if you're interested, my boy, and wouldn't mind giving me a little room, I'll endeavour to throw a back somersault."

"Nonsense, Grandfather!" I exclaimed with some irritation. "Bank, bank, bank, cobras, baboons, bloodhounds!"

"What!" cried my grandfather, raising his feet from the floor and grasping the poker.

"Bank, bank, bank," I repeated patiently.

"Ah, yes, the bank. Well, the first customer to whom I attended unaided provided me with a rather disconcerting experience. Mr. Tripper, the teller, was downstairs having half an hour with his dumb-bells and I was alone at the counter. Suddenly the door opened and in rushed a man in a big chocolate-coloured overcoat."

"I want to put a little something into copper," he said, looking furtively to right and left.

"Knowing nothing of stocks and shares and how they were bought and sold, I attempted to conceal my ignorance by advising him against such a purchase, and said that copper was being ousted by tin all the world over. 'There is no bottom to the market,' I added at a venture."

"He replied by repeating his request, at the same time depositing an ugly-looking cudgel on the counter."

"I hastily said that I would call Sir Hector, and asked him to take a seat."

"That I can't do," he replied. "If once I take the weight off my feet the earth will fly up to the sun, and us with it."

"At this I went to Sir Hector's room without more ado and quickly put the matter before him."

"It is poor Truble, my predecessor," he said. "He was involved in an

attempt by the directors of the Bushy Brush Company to rush the strong-room and remove their security—some Elizabethan bedsteads, I believe—and has never been the same man since. Say that we will buy him a thousand Hoogli Booglis."

"I did this, and Mr. Truble left the bank, apparently quite satisfied."

"About a month after this the incident occurred which led to my quarrel with Sir Hector and my resignation from the bank. Mr. Tripper was away at the time, nursing a broken

collar-bone, and on my own initiative I agreed to advance a small sum against a couple of hives of bees and a dozen Buff Orpington pullets. Sir Hector disapproved of this transaction, and when he was stung by a bee which I presented for his inspection he frankly lost his temper and gave me a nasty blow with Thomas's *Thoughts on Torts*, a volume of considerable size. Upon this I offered him my resignation, which he accepted on the spot."

"Thus my banking career came to an end before it had well begun."



"Och, tae blazes wi' it!"

Letters from a Gunner

XVIII

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Days come and go and sometimes it is Saturday by the calendar, but there is no cinema on Saturday night, no fish and chips, or supper at the Café Royal, according to the station in life which we have been pleased to leave. But occasionally Saturday night is a big night. A BIG NIGHT. Like last night.

We entertained the Thickenham and Nether Worksop Concert Party.

I have a great respect for the Thickenham and Nether Worksop Concert Party. After all, it was a Saturday night and they, being civilians, could have gone to the cinema, eaten fish and chips, supped at the Café Royal, according, etc. But no. They braved a December night and a strong south-westerly gale with more than occasional rain for the purpose of performing on an ill-lit stage and with an untuned piano in a damp marquee in the middle of a field that once grew grass but which is now almost entirely slime. Hats off, I say, to Thickenham and Nether Worksop! And we are not even in the parish of Nether Worksop.

The concert had some big moments too. In fact it started off like a Nine O'Clock Revue, when the leader, chairman, or compère announced an opening chorus as "Vive la Mort." I sat up and thought, Is this quite the thing? But all was well. I used to know the chorus as "Vive l'Amour," but where's the difference (said he, laughing cynically)?

The next item was a piano duet entitled "The Policeman's Holiday." It gave one that old pre-war nostalgia, and I wondered if we should have "Burlington Bertie" and a selection from "The Quaker Girl." But we skidded round that corner, and another performer broke into "Londonderry Air," played on a saw. At least I think it was "Londonderry Air." I expect the man saws very well.

Then we had some local talent. Bombardier Moon sang "The Bugler's Farewell." It is a sad story complete with snow and death. The bugler is the sole sentry on duty while his comrades bind their wounds, carouse or sleep. If the enemy attack over the frozen river the bugler must blow three blasts (why three?) on his bugle. Of course they do attack. And of course he is struck between blasts numbers two and three by a shell (Victorian, no doubt, not causing immediate decease), and of course he does manage to blow

the last and final blast ere life is extinct. An ugly story of incompetence and neglect of duty, and I should have liked to have written a fourth verse, and a fifth and sixth, if necessary, describing the court-martial of that troop's commanding officer. Unfortunately there was an encore which was no worse than "Drake's Drum."

After that the T. and N.W.C.P. got down to it and produced a small gentleman who sang a song announced as "Poor Old Joe." The little man was a trier. Gravely handicapped by nature, he did his best with Poor Old Joe. I cannot say he induced much feeling of pity for Poor Old Joe. Rather the reverse, for Poor Old Joe has at least been dead for some years. But he did induce a feeling of wholesome respect in our breasts. I should have liked (for technical reasons) to have heard him try "Excelsior" or the Prologue from "Pagliacci."

He was followed by "My Sweetie's Got 'Em Cold" (from the Battery's Rhythm Swingers, with *ersatz*-saxophone accompaniment). Thus you see mirrored the Progress of Civilisation in U.S.A.

It would take too long to catalogue the whole of the feast that was spread before us. I cherish a beautiful memory of three of the T. and N.W.C.P. (whom I mentally named the Bank Manager, the Vicar's Warden and the Undertaker) playing the "Marseillaise" and "Love's Old Sweet Song" on mouth-organs; of someone else playing the "Lost Chord" on a Hawaiian guitar, of our Sanitary Orderly singing "Cherry Ripe," and of the whole Company singing "Nellie Dean" and "We're Gonna Hang Out the Washing on the Siegfried Line" (different wars, different songs, with a vengeance). And of course "Auld Lang Syne."

We shall talk about this concert for months.



To turn to more military matters, last week I went for a day's instruction to our most hush-hush telephone centre, from which we are told all that it is thought fit for us to know about the movement of friendly and enemy planes. I have seen quite a different war.

Picture a pleasantly proportioned room lit by a fine coal fire round which are drawn up several comfortable chairs. I was received by an elderly major in carpet slippers, and all was explained to me. The remainder of the men in the room consisted half of telephonists and half of mess-orderlies, the mess-orderlies being engaged to wash up on arrival, then to serve tea and cut the sandwiches, and finally to brush away the crumbs and leave the room tidy for the next team. Important messages were kept in the cake-tin; one's cup and saucer were used as a paper-weight; etiquette demanded that one did not speak on the telephone with one's mouth full of cake, and the map table made an excellent desk on which to unravel *The Times* crossword. The officers of course had their own tea (in vacuum flasks) and were allowed to sit nearer the fire than the other ranks.

The room, in fact, was only waiting for the football-pools to begin again to become really happy and active.

It is a queer war.

Your loving Son,
HAROLD.

Just Back

(With apologies to the B.B.C.)

I AM just home from a visit to what was called by the poet Honk "the Garden of the East." I refer of course to Bow, or Stratford-atte-Bowe as it used to be called before ink became so expensive. Situated on the banks of the Thames, or nearly so, this delightful oasis in the desert of London is inhabited by a sturdy race of men with serious faces, insatiable thirsts and a passion for darts. I well remember my first visit to Bow in the halcyon days before the war, before the extra halfpenny was put on beer. How changed things are in these three short months! Those who used to drink bitter have sunk to mild, and the old saloon bar milds now patronise the public. What has happened to the old public bar milds is not known. Unable to afford the extra halfpenny, they have presumably gone away and drowned themselves. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*



"Waitab—get me a dispatch rider."

There is a delightfully cosmopolitan atmosphere about the modern Bow. Come with me into the saloon bar of the "Bird in Bush" and see the motley company assembled. Who, you ask, is the tall thin man with the winning smile, obviously a foreigner, who is chatting so persuasively with the landlord? He hails from distant Kensington and represents a firm of pickle manufacturers. Already the landlord has had three drinks at his expense and in a moment he will tell him that he does not want any pickles to-day. The foreigner packs his bag with a sigh and goes out into the night. But marauders from Kensington are not easily foiled, and he slinks into the public bar and sells two dozen bottles of best pickles to the landlord's wife.

The man playing on the pin-table is the local undertaker. The atmosphere is tense as the fourth ball takes his total to 14,000, and if he can get 2,000 with his last ball and there are no strangers in the bar who look like policemen he will get a threepenny packet of cigarettes.

Even in war-time the gay people of Bow have not lost their love of music. A man comes in with a sort of guitar and begins to play "Little Sir Echo" so abominably that a collection is hastily made and he is sped on his way. Somebody else goes to the piano and begins to play a sonata or something, and the landlord goes and locks the instrument and takes away the key. Somebody (a stranger from far Islington) asks the landlord to turn on the wireless so that he can hear the news. Nobody else, however, wants to hear it, so the quiet voice of the announcer is drowned in cries of "Same again," "I'll have a drop of rum in it," or "Old and young."

Not that Bow is uninterested in the war. Speculation is rife as to Hitler's ancestry, and views about his ultimate destination are freely canvassed with all the force and vigour of language of which this trenchant-speaking people are capable.

The undertaker is about to play his last ball, his face still wreathed in professional gloom. The landlord comes

from behind the bar and accidentally on purpose knocks his elbow just as he shoots. The ball registers a mere thousand and the undertaker goes home to find solace among his coffins.

The clock points to five minutes past twelve, and the other clock in the public bar points to two-thirty.

The potman begins to shout "Time, you toffs, please!" knowing that it is exactly ten-thirty, and one timid man hastens out. The habitués, however, make themselves more comfortable in their chairs or lean with added persistence on the counter. Let us leave them thus, these war-racked East Londoners, with the fervent hope in our hearts that they may one day be happy again, with beer down to its old price and an end of the necessity of dealing in farthings when purchasing the cheaper brands of cigarettes.

o o

More Petrol Economy

"Two hundred and forty bombers of the Royal Air Force, fanned by 1,000 men . . ."
Queensland Paper.



"... and here is the news."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Six Royal Sisters

WITH something of the curiosity—graceful, detached, yet wholly sympathetic—of the gardener's lad in the fairy tale who tracked the Seven Dancing Princesses, Miss DOROTHY MARGARET STUART explores the hidden as well as the public lives of *The Daughters of George III* (MACMILLAN, 15/-). There were six of them: CHARLOTTE AUGUSTA, AUGUSTA SOPHIA, ELIZABETH, MARY, SOPHIA and AMELIA—all intolerably well brought up and all clouded by the recurrent mania of their father, who, even at his brightest, failed to grasp that what his six girls wanted was six decent husbands. So the six un-dancing princesses had to escape as best they could; and as anything English and un-royal was taboo, found themselves grimly confronted by an unpleasant range of German princelings. The PRINCESS ROYAL married the Prince of WÜRTENBERG; AUGUSTA secretly (they say) an English commoner; ELIZABETH, after a possible furtive marriage and widowhood, the Landgrave of HESSE-HOMBURG; MARY, her royal cousin of GLOUCESTER. SOPHIA probably emulated AUGUSTA; while AMELIA's romance with CHARLES FITZROY was smothered for fear of upsetting the King. For this pathetic comedy the Windsor archives have been generously thrown open and material never before published has been woven into a delightful book.

A Truculent Escapist

MR. A. G. MACDONELL, or rather a certain *Ralph* who seems to have a good deal in common with the Mr. MACDONELL whom we already know, takes *Flight From a Lady* (MACMILLAN, 7/6) in a Douglas plane. His goal is some coral island where he may find peace from the sex in general and one seductive, exasperating and exigent member of it in particular, and his journey takes him over much of Europe and Asia. As he flies he writes, and occasionally cables; and, oddly and inconsistently enough, his letters and cablegrams are addressed to her from whom he is so desperately anxious to cover his tracks. They are very rude letters—rude to the generals of the late war and the politicians of the late peace, rude (as are so many people nowadays) to the "pluto-democrats," retrospectively rude to that Lord ELGIN who carried off the Parthenon Marbles from the sunlight of Athens to the smuts of Bloomsbury, and rudest of all to the lady herself. But they are also very entertaining letters, full of provocative ideas and disputable opinions which, inconsistently once more—for one of his most persistent charges against her is her brainlessness—this reluctant lover (or ex-lover as he too much protests himself) expects the lady to digest. As for the scenery over which he passes, he treats a good deal of it both literally and metaphorically *de haut en bas*—"I suppose I ought to go and glance at Benares, but I can't be bothered," is characteristic—but he can be both enthusiastic and finely descriptive. The end of his flight may be foreseen.

Bouquet for Bart's

There is always the chance that a volume incorporating literary offerings to a great charity may contain something—not impossibly several somethings—really memorable; and that which presents twenty-five stories, poems, sketches and plays on behalf of the much-needed extension to St. Bartholomew's Hospital is a case in point. Lord HORDER prefaces it in prose, HUMBERT WOLFE in verse; and MARJORIE BOWEN opens it with a miniature *conte* which is a triumph of old-world French atmosphere. Follow a pathetic and charming study of a Scandinavian retainer by ANN BRIDGE; a truly feline sketch of centenarian rivalry by St. JOHN ERVINE; a characteristic "Prologue to an Unfinished Novel," by J. B. PRIESTLEY; and a chapter of a new "Herries" chronicle (with a novel and intriguing turn to it) by HUGH WALPOLE. Among the poems, the bravest is O. St. J. GOGARTY'S "Blackbird in Town"; the finest C. DAY LEWIS'S "Two Passages from the Georgics." NOEL



"I don't mind the Germans as a nation—I just detest them individually."



G. L. Stampa. 9.15.

A MATTER OF COURTESY

GALLANT HIGHLAND OFFICER TAKING A LADY VOLUNTEER'S SALUTE.

G. L. Stampa, December 15th, 1915

COWARD's light comedy in one Act furnishes a staring contrast to a grisly little drama by EMLYN WILLIAMS. Obviously it is not often you can serve a cause and yourself so well as you can by buying *Rose Window* (HEINEMANN, 7/6).

Chinoiserie

Take three little Chinese girls of sixteen, thirteen and eight; transport them to America and Europe; encourage them to write diaries and comments; and perhaps—if the children are as well-educated and observant as the children of LIN YUTANG—you will get something as quaint and pretty as *Our Family* (CAPE, 7/6). Mrs. PEARL S. BUCK, who prefaces the unaided productions of ADET, ANOR and MEIMEI, maintains that incidentally these travel-pictures convey a very gracious idea of the courtesy and freedom of Chinese family life; and this is certainly true. One of

the chief delights of the book is the candour and gusto of its domestic relations. The grace of its approach to life's encounters, the precision with which it describes them, are equally memorable; but there is a flimsiness about the cosmopolitan, as opposed to the Chinese, outlook which suggests perhaps that culture is not enough. ADET's homage to Florence and the Arno which is "only for decorating the town," coupled with ANOR's tribute to the strong smell of American porters, give you between them a fairly just idea of the range of the children's likes and dislikes.

Gross Darkness

When *Freedom Shrieked* (GOLLANCZ, 10/6) is an account of the decline of Germany, free and growing happy as a republic, into the degraded slave-state of to-day.

Mr. ROTHAY REYNOLDS was in Berlin when Marshal HINDENBURG, aged eighty-five, committed the incomparable mistake of making HITLER Chancellor. He was present when the last genuine election was twisted out of its meaning by HITLER's lying promises to the dying Reichstag. He saw the opening of the persecution of the Jews and of the attack on Christianity; saw each new encroachment at home or abroad preceded by profounder perjuries, successful just in so far as they were incredible on any known basis of moral values. In four weeks of Nazi rule a free people was robbed with terrifying facility of liberty of Press and of speech, while in the space of a day organised labour lost membership, records, property. At the last the author has watched the Nazi leaders becoming rich, secure, smugly entrenched in fortress palaces amid a hungry population rendering forced labour in their defence; has seen HITLER, card-sharp divinity, accepting worship meet only for the Creator, while Germany faces the agony of war—The War of German Liberation—and a hundred years of shame. Only when this foulest of gang-crimes has been suppressed can the full tale of horrors be made known. This is one of the unchallengeable records which in the meantime gives the world some inkling of the truth.

Better Days

Miss MOYRA CHARLTON returns to the countryside in *Echoing Horn* (PUTNAM, 7/6), happily accompanied by Mr. LIONEL EDWARDS. The crisis of September, 1938, inspired her to verses on the good things in life made more vivid by the passing shadow of war; this book opens with these verses, which are good, and five short stories follow, illustrating their theme. The same hero blazes away from a wind-swept August butt and crawls painfully in the wake of a kilted martinet to bag a royal; in more sophisticated mood and more alluring company goes to Hurlingham to watch a tearing game won by a single goal; has a memorable day with a friendly pack and goes well; comes across a strange unorthodox horse at a week-end party and, finally, rides him to victory at a point-to-point. Miss CHARLTON is at home with these different aspects of sport and tells a story racily, especially when it has to do with her first love, the horse. Her idea of a shooting-lunch is almost faultless, but she mustn't speak of "whiskey, the native drink of the moors"—the "e" is vital, for it shifts the scene across the water to the south-west, to the benefit of the spirit, some think.



"She says she can't knit any other kind."

On the wrapper of *In the Teeth of the Evidence* (7/6) Messrs. GOLLANCZ announce "A New Sayers at last"; but although their statement is true enough, it nevertheless remains doubtful whether this volume of short stories will prove entirely satisfactory to the legions of Miss DOROTHY SAYERS' admirers. What, indeed, will they say when they find that the magnificent *Lord Peter Wimsey* takes a part in only two of these seventeen yarns, and that our good friend *Montague Egg*, though not quite so elusive, has to

be content with five appearances? Miss SAYERS' gems must be looked for among "Other Stories," and both "Scrawns" and "An Arrow O'er the House" have qualities that would give distinction to any collection. But "Dilemma," with a nice twist to its tail, will be for many of us the pick of the bunch.

Noble Men and Others

If affairs could be arranged in the Europe of to-day as easily as they are settled in *Exit a Dictator* (HODDER AND STOUTON, 7/6) the world would assuredly be a pleasanter and happier place. The royal, and Russian, duke who saved his country from chaos is, as depicted by Mr. E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM, a brave and romantic figure. "He was," we are told, "a man who had never known fear," and it is permissible to think that this was lucky, for so many attempts were made to kill him that any nervous man in his position must have become a gibbering idiot. This is not an entirely successful story, but so completely is Mr. OPPENHEIM at ease in telling it that his readers can without difficulty imagine themselves partakers in a wonderful and almost bloodless revolution.

To Christmas-present buyers Mr. Punch is happy to recommend *General Cargo* (METHUEN, 6/-), a collection of fifty-nine of the pieces in prose and verse, in almost every imaginable kind of vein, with which Mr. A. P. HERBERT has diversified these columns during the past year or so; and *Truly Rural* (DENT, 5/-), which reprints from *Punch* those distinctively ironical poems about the pleasures and pains of country life, now revealed to be by DANIEL PETTIWARD. This book also contains new verses and many comic little pen-drawings by PAUL CRUM.

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